

REMARKS:

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-11 were pending and considered. Claims 1-11 stand rejected. Pursuant to this Amendment, claims 1 and 10 have been amended, claims 4, 5, 9 and 11 have been cancelled, and new claims 12 and 13 have been added. Claims 1-3, 6-8, 10 and 12-13 remain pending in the subject application.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,264,393 (Kraus). This rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Without agreeing with the Examiner as to what is or is not taught by the art of record, claim 1 has been amended to more clearly set forth what it is the Applicant desires to patent. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the sealing mechanism extends at least partially into the bore defined by the head and body of the grommet so as to form an interference fit between the sealing mechanism and the pin. Contrary to the position of the Examiner, Figure 4 of Kraus does not illustrate this limitation and there is no teaching or suggestion in the art to modify Kraus to include this limitation.

In addition, claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the sealing mechanism is overmolded to the head of the grommet, and that the sealing mechanism is further configured such that the first and second portions of the sealing mechanism are joined together as a single molded component through a channel defined in the head of the grommet. There is no teaching or suggestion in Kraus that the sealing element is overmolded to the head of the grommet, nor is there any teaching or suggestion in Kraus that the sealing element includes two portions that are joined together to form a single molded component by way of a channel extending from a top surface of the head of the grommet to an undersurface of the head of the grommet. In fact, Kraus teaches that the sealing lip 28 and bulge 27 are separate and distinct from the sealing plate 42 (see, e.g., Figure 4, col. 3, lines 50-55).

A feature of the present invention is that the sealing mechanism includes two portions that are mechanically bonded together through the channel of the head so as to provide a sturdier,

more dependable seal. In other words, one portion cannot easily be peeled away from the mating structure because of the integral arrangement between the two portions. Unlike the present invention, the sealing element of Krause does not provide this feature. Because the sealing lip 28 and bulge 27 are separate and distinct from the sealing plate 42, the sealing plate 42 will in no way help to prevent the sealing lip 28 and bulge 27 from peeling away from the grommet, nor will the sealing lip 28 and bulge 27 prevent the sealing plate 42 from peeling away from its mating structure.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Kraus, taken alone or in combination with the other art of record. The claims depending from claim 1 are patentable for the same reasons applied thereto and for the additional subject recited in each.

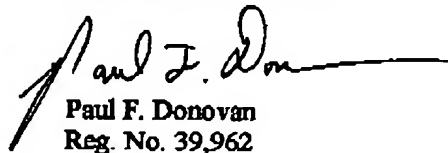
New dependent claim 12 and independent claim 13 have been added to define further patentable subject matter not taught by the art of record.

No new matter has been added by way of the amendments and remarks made herein. Reconsideration and allowance of all the remaining pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the event that there are any issues that need to be addressed, in order to expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,


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